

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/IAI:GDKULICK/HLK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077932

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, IS, US, LEB

SUBJECT: BRIEFING OF FRENCH AMBASSADOR ON BEGIN VISIT AND
LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: ATHERTON TOLD LABOULAYE U.S. AND ISRAEL WERE
UNABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON ISSUES OF FUTURE OF WEST BANK/
GAZA AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. EVEN
WHEN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE RULED OUT, BEGIN UNWILL-
ING TO ALTER HIS POSITION RULING OUT ACCEPTANCE OF THE
PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL WITH RESPECT TO THE WEST BANK.
BEGIN SAID NO NEW SETTLEMENTS WOULD BE BUILT IN SINAI WHILE
NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT BEING PURSUED, BUT NEW SETTLEMENTS
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ON WEST BANK MAY CONTINUE. ON LEBANON, ATHERTON SAID
ISRAELIS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW BUT SKEPTICAL OF EFFECTIVENESS
OF UNIFIL. LABOULAYE SAID FRENCH ARE URGING RESTRAINT ON
IRAQIS. END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR LABOULAYE CALLED ON ATHERTON AT HIS
REQUEST FOR BRIEFING ON BEGIN VISIT. MR. ATHERTON SAID

THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURE OF THIS MEETING WAS THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE TWO PRINCIPALS GOT DOWN TO REAL DETAILS ON THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE DISCUSSION ON LEBANON.

3. THE TWO BASIC ISSUES WERE THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK

AND GAZA AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY. ON THE FORMER, WE STRESSED THAT PREVIOUS ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS HAD ACCEPTED THE UNIVERSAL INTERPRETATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 AS REQUIRING WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS, INCLUDING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. OUR POSITION TAKES FULLY INTO ACCOUNT ISRAEL'S VERY REAL SECURITY CONCERNS AND ALLOWS FOR SOME ADJUSTMENT OF BORDERS, DEMILITARIZATION, AND LENGTHY (E.G., 5 YEARS) TRANSITION PERIOD, AT THE END OF WHICH WE WOULD ENVISAGE A LIMITED ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. WE DO NOT ENVISAGE COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE AS ONE OF THE OPTIONS, BUT FAVOR STRONG BINDING LINKS BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE WEST BANK/GAZA. ALL OF THE NEIGHBORING ARAB STATES SHARE, TO SOME DEGREE, THE BELIEF THAT A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IS NOT REALISTIC OR DESIRABLE. THE PRESIDENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE BELIEVE THE GOI'S PRESENT POSITION ON THE WEST BANK/GAZA WILL MAKE A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES-- A SINE QUA NON FOR PROGRESS ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT--
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IMPOSSIBLE.

4. ON THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE, BEGIN PROMISED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO NEW SETTLEMENTS INITIATED IN THE SINAI WHILE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT WERE CONTINUING, BUT EXISTING SETTLEMENTS WILL BE DEVELOPED WITH NEW SETTLERS, NEW HOUSES, AND ADDITIONAL GROUND PREPARATION. IN OUR VIEW, THIS IS STILL UNDESIRABLE BUT IS, AT LEAST, LESS THAN WAS ORIGINALLY PLANNED BY ISRAEL. ON THE WEST BANK, BEGIN SAID THAT NEW SETTLEMENTS WOULD BE PERMITTED IN PRINCIPLE BUT THE DECISIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AT FULL CABINET LEVEL AND WILL BE MADE IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATION SITUATION. OUR VIEW IS THAT ALL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY ON THE WEST BANK SHOULD STOP. IN SHORT, THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL ON EITHER OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES. WE MADE AN EFFORT WITH DAYAN TO KEEP THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS GOING ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, AND DAYAN WAS A MODERATING INFLUENCE. NOW BEGIN MUST REPORT TO THE CABINET AND THERE WILL, NO DOUBT, BE A LIVELY DEBATE IN THE KNESSET. WE WILL ALSO CONSULT WITH SADAT AND WILL URGE HIM TO GIVE TIME FOR DEBATE

TO WORK ITS WAY THROUGH THE ISRAELI POLITICAL PROCESS.

5. LABOULAYE ASKED IF THE ISRAELIS WERE WILLING TO LEAVE THEIR SINAI SETTLEMENTS IN A ZONE UNDER UN ADMINISTRATION. ATHERTON SAID THEY WERE, BUT THEY INSISTED ON THE RETENTION OF ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES TO PROTECT THEM.

6. AMBASSADOR LABOULAYE NOTED THAT THE U.S. WAS RESPONSIVE TO ISRAELI CONCERNS BY MAKING CLEAR ITS OPPOSITION TO AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE AND ASKED WHETHER WE HAD OFFERED ISRAEL SECURITY GUARANTEES. ATHERTON SAID THAT, AS IN THE PAST, IF ISRAEL WANTS A MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY WITH THE U.S., WE WILL
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CERTAINLY CONSIDER IT BUT OBVIOUSLY CONGRESS HAS THE FINAL SAY HERE. INTERESTINGLY, BEGIN WAS MORE POSITIVE ON THIS ISSUE IN HIS NATIONAL PRESS CLUB SPEECH THAN HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST.

7. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, MR. ATHERTON SAID WE STILL INTENDED TO PRESENT THE VARIOUS PROPOSED AIRCRAFT SALES AS A PACKAGE. THE PRESIDENT WAS ALREADY CONSULTING WITH THE CONGRESS AND TIMING OF FORMAL SUBMISSION OF THE REQUEST WOULD DEPEND ON THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY DEBATE. ISRAEL, OF COURSE, OPPOSES LINKING ITS OWN REQUESTS WITH THOSE OF EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. IT STRONGLY OPPOSES ANY SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA, BUT IS LESS ADAMANT ON THE EGYPTIAN SALES.

8. REGARDING LEBANON, ATHERTON SAID THAT THE ISRAELIS PLEDGED TO WITHDRAW, BUT THEY ARE SKEPTICAL OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCES. THEY WOULD LIKE THE LEBANESE ARMY AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITAS TO PLAY AS LARGE A ROLE AS POSSIBLE. THEIR MAIN CONCERNS ARE THAT PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS DO NOT RETURN SOUTH OF THE LITANI RIVER. THEY ARE ALSO WORRIED ABOUT PALESTINIAN REINFORCEMENTS IN THE AREA NORTH OF THE LITANI. HE NOTED THAT THE SYRIANS HAD AGREED WITH LEBANON'S REQUEST NOT TO PERMIT FURTHER CONVOYS TO ENTER LEBANON FROM OUTSIDE WITH SUPPLIES FOR DIRECT DELIVERY TO THE PLO.

9. AMBASSADOR LABOULAYE SAID THAT THE FRENCH WERE APPROACHING THE IRAQIS TODAY TO URGE RESTRAINT. MR. ATHERTON SAID THAT WE WERE FAVORABLE TO THE IDEA OF ADF (SYRIAN) TROOPS MOVING DOWN TO THE LITANI RIVER TO
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CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THE ADF AND UNIFIL LINES, BUT THE ISRAELIS STILL HAVE RESERVATIONS. THIS MATTER WILL BE HANDLED BY THE UNITED NATIONS COMMANDER IN LEBANON, BUT WE WILL SUPPORT HIS EFFORTS.

10. LABOULAYE URGED THAT U.S. ENCOURAGE ISRAELIS NOT TO INSIST ON MAINTAINING AND PUBLICIZING SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON, WHICH PUTS GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION IN

EFFORTS TO EXTEND ITS AUTHORITY IN SOUTH. ATHERTON AGREED THIS WAS A PROBLEM FOR GOL AND SHOULD BE PLAYED DOWN BY ISRAELIS. AS PRACTICAL MATTER, HOWEVER, ISRAELIS WERE NOT REPEAT NOT GOING TO AGREE TO CUT THEIR TIES WITH CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH OR CLOSE BORDER; BEST THING WOULD BE FOR GOL TO FIND WAYS TO CLOSE ITS EYES TO THIS. VANCE

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